



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Highway  
Administration  
Federal Transit  
Administration**

# Memorandum

Subject: ACTION: FHWA-FTA Planning Collaboration Initiative

Date: September 2, 2003

From: Jennifer L. Dorn, Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration

Reply to  
Attn. of: HEP-1/TPE-1

Mary E. Peters, Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration

To: FTA Regional Administrators  
FHWA Division Administrators

The purpose of this memorandum is to transmit the Planning Collaboration Initiative (PCI) National Memorandum of Action (MOA) and to request your participation in the development/update of field MOAs. The goal of the PCI is to improve the collective effectiveness of the planning and review processes of FHWA and FTA through more efficient and coordinated use of staff and other resources. By so doing, the aim is to enhance the quality of assistance in response to customer expectations, and to improve our delivery of oversight in terms of timeliness and consistency.

The attached MOA outlines the guiding principles and the mechanisms necessary to facilitate the FTA and FHWA fulfillment of the joint metropolitan and statewide planning obligations. It also establishes a framework for exploring innovative approaches in satisfying our mutual responsibilities for transportation planning and programming of Federal transportation funds.

We are requesting your active participation in the PCI. Your leadership is necessary to identify and act upon opportunities to improve the effectiveness of your offices in managing the metropolitan and statewide planning programs. The FHWA Georgia Division and the FTA Region 4 offices should be commended for their thorough efforts in developing a new agreement. Specified in this agreement are roles and responsibilities of each party, the implementation process as well as expected delivery timeframes. Please visit the PCI website to see this agreement at [pci.volpe.dot.gov](http://pci.volpe.dot.gov).

If you have any questions please contact: Vincent Valdes, [Vincent.Valdes@fta.dot.gov](mailto:Vincent.Valdes@fta.dot.gov), FTA Office of Planning and Environment, 202/366-3052 or Robin Mayhew, [Robin.Mayhew@fhwa.dot.gov](mailto:Robin.Mayhew@fhwa.dot.gov), FHWA Office of Planning, 202/366-1454.

# ***NATIONAL MEMORANDUM OF ACTION***

## **FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION**

## **FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION**

### ***For the Collaborative Administration of Transportation Planning and Programming***

#### **INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVE**

The Secretary of Transportation delegated oversight and administration of planning to both the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Since 1976, FHWA and FTA have jointly developed regulations and administered the requirements thereof. FTA and FHWA have a long and continuing record of cooperation and coordination in the delivery of the surface transportation program of the United States Department of Transportation. The Planning Collaboration Initiative (PCI), through this Memorandum of Action (MOA), serves to reinforce the strong working relationship of the two agencies by articulating the principles of shared commitment that underlie their individual work and decision-making in the transportation planning process.

The goal of the PCI is to improve the collective effectiveness of the planning and review processes of FHWA and FTA through more efficient and coordinated use of staff and other resources. By so doing, the aim is to enhance the quality of assistance in response to customer expectations, and to improve our delivery of oversight in terms of timeliness and consistency.

This MOA outlines the guiding principles and the mechanisms necessary to facilitate the FTA and FHWA fulfillment of the joint metropolitan and statewide planning obligations. It also establishes a framework for exploring innovative approaches in satisfying our mutual responsibilities for transportation planning and programming of Federal transportation funds. More specifically, this MOA is being executed to respond to the needs of state and local level transportation stakeholders for more streamlined, transparent, and less duplicative Federal actions on planning programs and products, including the following (which were the subject of a series of teleconferences between FTA and FHWA Field and Headquarters staff):

#### **PLANNING TOPICS**

- ◆ Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Documentation and Approval
- ◆ Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
- ◆ Metropolitan and Statewide Planning Findings
- ◆ Transportation Management Area (TMA) Certification
- ◆ Congestion Management Systems (CMS) and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)
- ◆ Air Quality Conformity Determination and CMAQ
- ◆ Alternatives Analysis, Planning/Corridor Studies

#### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

FTA and FHWA mutually agree to the following guiding principles for improving the execution of their responsibilities for transportation planning activities in all states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. This agreement will become a guiding document for each FTA Region office and FHWA Division office, including Metro Offices, and it is designed to provide a framework within which individual offices can tailor their own working agreements. The principles contained in this MOA will be evaluated periodically to ensure they continue to meet the needs of FTA and FHWA.

To meet our mutual commitments and to satisfy the needs of our customers, FTA and FHWA hereby agree to:

**I. Clearly Define Roles and Responsibilities**

Establish explicit roles at the program and office level for each agency in carrying out metropolitan and statewide planning activities to preclude redundancy and identify accountability for external customers.

**II. Improve Coordination and Communication**

Recognize the need for partnerships and information sharing and develop mechanisms at the program and office level to ensure the involvement of all planning stakeholders and promote delivery of timely, high quality planning outcomes and products to external customers.

**III. Facilitate Conflict Resolution**

Establish guidance on conflict resolution strategies for potential situations that might arise between FHWA Division and FTA Regional offices. This component could be applied on an as-needed basis in any of the planning topics.

**IV. Leverage Available Resources**

Create opportunities to leverage (share, mentor, promote) the respective Agencies' knowledge and expertise in specific areas. Develop tools and procedures to increase efficiency and ensure the best use of staff time and resources especially as related to external customer products and processes.

**V. Capacity Building**

Create opportunities for building the technical capacity and skills of field office personnel through and formal and informal processes.

**VI. Use Technology to Increase Efficiency**

Establish at the local level, where possible and appropriate, protocols for the use of timesaving technologies for the completion of joint planning activities and products. Provide the technical means to streamline the processing of materials between Region and Division offices as well as external transportation stakeholders.

**VII. Systematically Measure Performance**

Support Field offices in the development of explicit customer service measures to evaluate their performance in the PCI. Ensure coordination at the program and office level in the development of measures.

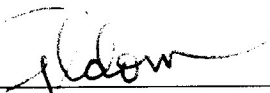
**IMPLEMENTATION (PHASE II OF THE PCI)**

Phase II of the PCI encompasses the development of individual field agreements between Region and Division offices involving revisions to existing local agreements or the creation of new ones. Local MOAs will be tailored to the needs of the Division(s) and Regional offices entering into the agreement. Phase II also involves the participation of selected Field offices in **PILOT PROJECTS** that put into action many of the innovative methods suggested by Field staff during the PCI conference calls (Please see Attachment 1).

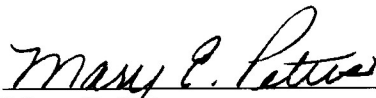
**EVALUATION**

Evaluation of the PCI's effectiveness is an important aspect of this initiative and will be made within the context of the Field MOAs and **PILOT PROJECTS**. The evaluation strategy for PCI will allow FTA and FHWA to monitor our progress in achieving our stated objectives for the project. Within one year after this National MOA is established,

all FTA and FHWA field offices will conduct a joint review of existing agreements, the guiding principles and Attachment 1 of this National MOA and then establish field MOAs. A signed copy of the final field MOAs will be supplied to headquarters. Each field MOA and proposed **PILOT PROJECT** will include performance measures (defined cooperatively by the Field offices) to provide insights on the status of the key processes and products they aim to improve.

  
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Jennifer L. Dorn  
Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration

8/24/03  
Date

  
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Mary E. Peters  
Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration

9/2/03  
Date

## **ATTACHMENT 1 – MENU OF OPTIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The following table contains the “menu of options” or recommended actions as suggested by Field staff during the eight PCI conference calls held between March 5 and April 10, 2003. These options are a list of actions that could be included in a local MOA between FTA Region and FHWA Division offices as they make an effort to improve the process by which they conduct joint planning activities for their customers. These options may also serve as the basis for field ***PILOT PROJECTS*** between FTA and FHWA. These are by no means the only possible options nor should this be construed to indicate that every measure listed here should be adopted by FTA and FHWA Field offices at once. The table merely illustrates the inventiveness and thoughtfulness of the FTA and FHWA staff as they consider ways of meeting their responsibilities in metropolitan and statewide planning. Each option is shown next to the Planning Topic and Guiding Principle it satisfies.

<b>PCI OPTION</b>	<b>PLANNING TOPIC(S)</b>	<b>GUIDING PRINCIPLE(S)</b>
Identify and implement procedures for early coordination between FTA and FHWA, prior to the commencement of a mutual planning effort, to develop and agree upon shared responsibilities.	- All planning topics.	- CLEARLY DEFINE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES - IMPROVE COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION
Assign, under appropriate circumstances, lead status to one agency on behalf of the other. ,	- All planning topics.	- CLEARLY DEFINE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES - IMPROVE COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION
After a review of the division of responsibility and authority between the two agencies on all planning products and programs, develop collaborative policies and measures that reflect that distribution. This would include signature authority.	- All planning topics.	- CLEARLY DEFINE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES - IMPROVE COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION
Delegate signature authority from one agency to the other on certain planning products. Also delegate signature authority down to the lowest practical level.	- STIP Approval & Amendments - UPWP Reviews - Planning Findings - Certification Reviews - Air Quality Determination	- CLEARLY DEFINE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES - IMPROVE COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION
Establish timelines for the completion of planning products. Field offices would develop negotiated timelines to allow for local conditions while meet the needs of their customers in a timely manner.	- STIP Approval & Amendments - UPWP Reviews - Planning Findings - Certification Reviews - Air Quality Determination - Timeliness, Consistency, and Performance Measures	- IMPROVE COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION - SYSTEMATICALLY MEASURE PERFORMANCE

PCI OPTION	PLANNING TOPIC(S)	GUIDING PRINCIPLE(S)
Where identified by Field offices, implement an Intermodal Planning Group (IPG) as a model for collaboration and information sharing.	- All planning topics.	- IMPROVE COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION
Establish a system for information sharing and staff exchanges between FTA Region offices and FHWA Division offices.	- All planning topics. -	- IMPROVE COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION - LEVERAGE AVAILABLE RESOURCES
Ensure broad stakeholder involvement by encouraging Field offices to include each other and all other regional transportation partners on planning-related announcements, mailings, and communications.	- All planning topics.	- IMPROVE COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION
Implement cross training between planners at FTA Region offices and FHWA Division offices. Fund dedicated planning positions at Region offices and provide transit cross training to FHWA field planning staff.	- All planning topics.	- IMPROVE COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION - LEVERAGE AVAILABLE RESOURCES
Create opportunities for staff trained in congestion management to work with FTA Region staff on issues of congestion and multi-modal planning.	- CMS and ITS	- IMPROVE COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION - LEVERAGE AVAILABLE RESOURCES
Use contractors or other resources (i.e., the Resource Centers) to produce final reports and other products, where appropriate	- Certification Reviews	- LEVERAGE AVAILABLE RESOURCES
Support the development of multi-modal planning practices as related to CMS and ITS, to be executed by either FTA or FHWA.	- CMS and ITS	- LEVERAGE AVAILABLE RESOURCES
Develop template materials for use in preparing planning documents, letters, agendas, and reports.	- STIP Approval & Amendments - UPWP Reviews - Planning Findings - Certification Reviews	- IMPROVE COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION - LEVERAGE AVAILABLE RESOURCES

PCI OPTION	PLANNING TOPIC(S)	GUIDING PRINCIPLE(S)
Establish core standards of consistency for the content and format of planning products, and direct their implementation across all Field offices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- STIP Approval &amp; Amendments</li> <li>- UPWP Reviews</li> <li>- Planning Findings</li> <li>- Certification Reviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- IMPROVE COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION</li> <li>- LEVERAGE AVAILABLE RESOURCES</li> <li>- SYSTEMATICALLY MEASURE PERFORMANCE</li> </ul>
Establish appropriate protocols for the use of electronic-signature technologies for the approval of joint planning documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- STIP Approval &amp; Amendments</li> <li>- UPWP Reviews</li> <li>- Planning Findings</li> <li>- Certification Reviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- USE TECHNOLOGY TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY</li> </ul>
Provide guidance on the electronic submission of materials to Region and Division offices by Metropolitan Planning Organizations and other transportation stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- STIP Approval &amp; Amendments</li> <li>- UPWP Reviews</li> <li>- Planning Findings</li> <li>- Certification Reviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- USE TECHNOLOGY TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY</li> </ul>
Establish locally developed mechanisms to evaluate performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All planning topics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SYSTEMATICALLY MEASURE PERFORMANCE</li> </ul>
Provide incentive awards to FTA/FHWA teams that succeed in meeting their performance goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All planning topics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SYSTEMATICALLY MEASURE PERFORMANCE</li> </ul>
Identify, implement and use measures to spot and correct weaknesses and needs in the timely delivery of planning actions and products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All planning topics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SYSTEMATICALLY MEASURE PERFORMANCE</li> </ul>
Use performance data to identify resource and capacity needs at FTA and FHWA Field offices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All planning topics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SYSTEMATICALLY MEASURE PERFORMANCE</li> </ul>
Promote and ensure close coordination between FTA and the Federal Lands Divisions on transit/alternative transportation planning for Federal Land Management Agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Timeliness, Consistency, and Performance Measures</li> <li>- Planning/Corridor Studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- IMPROVE COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION</li> <li>- LEVERAGE AVAILABLE RESOURCES</li> <li>- SYSTEMATICALLY MEASURE PERFORMANCE</li> </ul>